



## A walk among the Roses



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### Chapter 1 by Alice Marie Bride

She stood there, panting heavily. Mist swirled about her feet, milky white. The moonlight bounced off of the low-cloud, nearly creating enough light to see the whole clearing. Sweat dripped off of her forehead, the area devoid of sounds, except for the dampened wheeze of her breath. She fell to her knees, only her shoulders and up protruding from the mist. She didn't even hear them coming.

"Hello, Poppet."

He approached slowly, not even stirring the fog like air. His brooding and skulking silhouette got closer and closer, until she was looking at his feet. She kept her eyes down, not daring to look up. She shook in fear, her trembles disturbing the fog that settled around her knees. He loomed above her, looking down with a wicked grin.

"Left something behind, dearie?" He flashed a pendant.

She still refused to look up, balling her hands up into fists. More dark forms slowly approached, dotting the mist, but not disturbing it. She shifted slightly, tendrils swirling around her. The forms remained motionless, but their icy-blue eyes stared unblinkingly. The longer she remained silent, the longer they stared.

She was helpless.

"Well, darling?" He kicked her side, sending her skidding a few feet.

The others laughed—horrible little giggles that came from the once-silent creatures, ranging from insults to screams.

"It looks like she isn't talking," he said, his voice dripping with malice as he effortlessly flung her into the air.

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She was hopeless.

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